



Jouyissance Early Music Ensemble presents

Spirit Child The Sequel

Nicole Baker, Artistic Director



Saturday, January 4, 2025
Holy Nativity Episcopal Church, Westchester, CA

Sunday, January 5, 2025
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Monrovia, CA

Jouyssance Early Music Ensemble

Nicole Baker, Director

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Rebecca Russell
Mia Noriega Searight
John Schroeder
Sheila Shahbazi
George Sterne
Eileen Taschereau

Rick Dechance, Associate Director

Cast of Characters

Narrator – Gustavo Arellano
Angel – Rick Dechance
Maria – Jennifer Jurick
Gila – Rebecca Russell
Bartolo – Steve Padilla

Instrumentalists

Alejandro Acosta – Baroque Guitar
John Schroeder – Percussion

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Spirit Child Concert Program

Hanacpachap cusicuinin	Anonymous (early 17 th C.)
Miserere mei, Deus	Hernando Franco (1532-1585)
Magnificat tertia toni	Juan de Lienas (fl. 1617-1654)
<i>Incipits sung by Rick Dechance</i>	
Cui luna, sol et omnia	Francisco López Capillas (1608 – 1674)
Al establo más dichoso	Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c.1590-1664)
Xicochi, xicochi conetzintle	Gaspar Fernandes (c.1570-1629)
Galegos bailarines	Tomás Mizieres (1655-1718)

Intermission

Vamos al portal	Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599)
Sã qui turo zente pleta	Anonymous (1640s, Portugal)
Tambalagumbá	Padilla
Magos a palacio vais	Fernandes
¡Hombres, victoria, victoria!	Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599)
Jesós de mi goraçón	Fernandes
Los que fueren de buen gusto	Francisco de Vidales (c.1630-1702)
<i>Sheila Shahbazi, Elizabeth Laughton, Rebecca Russell</i>	
Convidando esta la noche	Juan García de Zéspedes (c.1619-1678)

Program Notes

Welcome to the newest edition of *Spirit Child*, which interweaves music from Nueva España with our own take on a Mexican *pastorela* — traditional plays, still performed in Mexico and the Southwestern United States, that recount the shepherds' pilgrimage to the newborn Jesus in Bethlehem. Irreverent and even comical at times, the tale's true subject is the conflict between good and evil. Our show is inspired in part by *Psalmody Christiana*, a work by Bernardino de Sahagún (1499-1590) that recounts biblical tales and lives of various saints. A Spanish Franciscan missionary to the Aztec, or Nahuatl, people, Sahagún produced the first encyclopedia in the New World (in Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl), and penned what has been translated as *Spirit Child*, a nativity story laced with traditional Aztec imagery.

In addition to drawing on Sahagún, our narration is also inspired by a 1984 children's book *Spirit Child, A Story of the Nativity*, translated from the Nahuatl by John Bierhorst and illustrated by Barbara Cooney.

Illustrating different aspects of the storyline are musical selections from the New World, Spain and Portugal, representing a host of traditions. Beginning in the early 16th century, Catholic missionaries from Spain brought musicians to the Americas and trained the native-born people to sing music of such masters as Morales, Victoria and Guerrero. In time new music was composed, and Spanish, Aztec, Incan and other styles intermingled, often flavored with influences from the African slaves brought in to build the new colonies. The Aztecs already had a rich musical tradition: their music, both sacred and secular, was associated with dancing, and its rhythms infuse much of the music you will hear tonight. One might notice that some of the music creeps well into the 18th century: it wasn't unusual for learned *stile antico* polyphony to flourish alongside middle Baroque styles in early 18th century Mesoamerica.

We begin with the anonymous Incan Quechua hymn *Hanacpachap cussicuinin*, considered to be the first published polyphonic work in the New World. The stately procession demonstrates how the Spanish proselytized with Indigenous languages.

Hernando Franco (1532-1585) most likely emigrated from Spain to Nueva España in 1554, working first in Guatemala and later becoming *maestro de capilla* in Mexico City. Possibly the earliest composer on our program, his solemn psalm-setting *Miserere mei, Deus* adheres to the Counter Reformation in its simplicity and heavily homophonic texture.

Little is known about the one of the earliest Mexican-born composers of polyphony, Juan de Lienas, who flourished between 1617 and 1654. According to musicologist Craig Russell, some contemporary references to the possible nobleman are far from complimentary (one called him a "chubby, stuck-up fop"). His five-voice *Magnificat tertia toni*, composed in the *stile antico*, involves verses of chant alternating with highly skilled polyphony that rivals the Spanish masters of the 16th century.

Outside of a brief stint at the important Mexican musical center of Puebla Cathedral, Francisco López Capillas (1608 – 1674) spent his entire career in his hometown of Mexico City. The 17th century composer was influenced by the *prima prattica* of Palestrina and Morales, and possibly by Padilla. He returned to Mexico City in 1754 and became the prestigious Cathedral's *maestro de capilla*. His haunting *Cui luna, sol et omnia* straddles Renaissance and Baroque styles, with its unusual harmonies and intricate counterpoint.

A native of Málaga, Spain, Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c. 1590-1664) served first as *maestro de capilla* at Cádiz before emigrating to Puebla in 1622 and working under Gaspar Fernandes. Upon Fernandes' death in 1629, Padilla became the Cathedral's *maestro de capilla*. We present two of his *villancicos* — works in Spanish based on a medieval dance form. The first, the joyous *Al establo más dichoso*, is part of Padilla's cycle of *villancicos* for Christmas 1652. The work resembles an *ensalada*, with multiple sections in contrasting styles. It's believed that parts of the work, including some of its dances, were already familiar to the audience or congregation. The later work *Tambalagumbá*, found in the second half in our program, is typical of the music featured at large celebrations of feast days at Puebla Cathedral. This grand six-voice work is a *negrilla*, which musicologist Robert Stevenson identifies as a work infused with African rhythms and speech patterns.

It's not certain who wrote the upbeat *Galegos bailarines*, which compares the trek to Bethlehem to pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. The composer is listed as a Tomás Miciezes or Mizieres, but it could be either the father (1624-1667), who worked in Segovia, or the son (1655-1718), who served in Salamanca. The strongly tonal, middle-Baroque style, and its sole appearance in a manuscript from Salamanca, suggests the composer is Tomás the younger. "Galego" is Galician for someone from Galicia. Spanish-speakers will be more familiar with the Spanish version of Gallego.

The immensely prolific and well-traveled Spanish composer Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599) is best known for his skilled polyphony, learned most likely from his mentor, Cristóbal de Morales. This can be heard in his *Vamos al portal*, a *villancico* which boasts harmonies evoking the sense of mystery and anticipation on approaching the manger. Guerrero's more bombastic side can be seen later in the program in *¡Hombres, victoria, victoria!*, with its chaotic battle cries. Guerrero's music circulated extensively abroad; its ubiquitous presence in the New World gives many the false impression that he worked in Latin America.

Despite its widespread popularity among aficionados of New World music, we have no idea who may have written the *villancico de negros*, *Sã qui turo zente pleta*, which imports the rhythms and speech patterns of African slaves. We do know it may have roots at the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, an important Portuguese center of music during the 16th and 17th centuries. The African-Portuguese-Spanish *criolla* dialect originates from the Gulf of Guinea, and the piece represents the cultural melting pot of the Portuguese colonies.

Gaspar Fernandes (c. 1570-1629) composed several *villancicos* on tonight's program, all showing influence from native cultures. Born in Portugal, he emigrated first to Guatemala before being named *maestro de capilla* at Puebla Cathedral in 1606. While in Mesoamerica, Fernandes wrote more than 250 songs and *villancicos* in Spanish, Portuguese, Nahuatl and various African dialects. Full of hemiolas and syncopation, Fernandes' *villancicos* seemed particularly well suited to Indigenous texts, including tonight's *Jesús de me goraçón*, and the beloved call-and-response lullaby *Xicochi, xicochi. Magos que a palacio vais*, which also features some antiphonal passages, demonstrates Fernandes' gift for complex polyphony.

A native of Mexico City, organist and composer Francisco de Vidales (c. 1630-1702) worked first at his home Cathedral alongside López Capilla before moving on to Puebla Cathedral, where he served as principal organist under Padilla, Zéspedes and Salazar. Most of his compositions are lost except for a few motets and *villancicos*. His *Los que fueren de buen gusto*, a virtuosic treble trio, bridges the Renaissance and Baroque in its harmonies and features extensive "native" syncopation.

Juan García de Zéspedes (1619-1678) spent much of his career at the Cathedral in his native Puebla. His mastery ranges from *stile antico* polyphony to the more raucous kind of music heard tonight. The quintessentially Mexican *Convidando está la noche* actually consists of only two lines of music: an introductory *juguete* (vocal prelude) in majestic, five-voice homophonic chords, and a zippy *guaracha* for two soloists answered by the choir. The piece drives to a climax utilizing hypnotic rhythmic hemiolas coupled with repeated I-IV-V harmonies.

— Nicole Baker, Ph.D

Translations

Some of the texts in tonight's program are rather extensive: *Al establo más dichoso*, for example, has 520 words. So we've created the following summaries to capture the meaning and spirit of the music. The complete lyrics can be found by using this QR code, or by visiting jouyissance.org.



Hanaqpachap cusicuynin (Heaven's joy)

The Quechua lyrics begin with the words "Heaven's joy," and refer to the Virgin Mary as the "tree bearing thrice-blessed fruit" and the "helper of the weak." The speaker asks Mary, who is described as a "beautiful iris, yellow and white" to "receive this song we offer you" and come to the aid of humankind.

Miserere mei, Deus (Have mercy on me, God)

The traditional Latin text is based upon Psalm 51, which begins with the phrase "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy." The speaker acknowledges his sinful ways and asks for forgiveness, for that is the way to salvation: *Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui, et spiritu principali confirma me.* "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and strengthen me with a perfect spirit."

Magnificat, anima mea (My soul doth magnify the Lord)

One of the principal texts of Christianity, the Canticle of Mary expresses her devotion to God and willingness to serve Him. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden." Mary recounts God's good works — such as "He hath put down the mighty" and "He has filled hungry with good things" — and praises the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Magnificat ends with the immortal line *Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.* Amen. "As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Cui luna (He that the moon)

The brief Latin text refers to the Christ Child: *Cui luna, sot el omnia deserviunt per tempora, perfusa caeli gratia gestant puellae viscera.* "He that the Moon, the Sun and all things service all times, by the outpouring of heavenly grace was born of a virgin."

Al establo más dichoso (At the most blessed stable)

The villancico opens with a description of the "most blessed stable," where on a most "fortunate night" a child was born and a boy with panpipes played at the straw-filled manger. All of Bethlehem is singing for the boy born and each bit of straw appears as a blazing star. The lyrics then describe the shepherd Bartolo (who is also a character in tonight's narration) and share his backstory: he was swordsman in days gone by, a mule skinner and a seller of candies. Bartolo is a bit of a dunce, the lyrics tell us, and though he praises Jesus, he also speaks some nonsense.

The lyrics then turn to refrain that will be heard a few times, *Ven y verás un donoso chiquito. Míralo bien, que en sus ojos me miro.* "Come and you will see a genteel little boy. Look on him well, for in his eyes I see myself." The qualities of the Christ Child are then spelled out in several ways: he is a jewel among the poor, a little lamb full of love, a tiny shepherd. The lyrics return to describing the manger, noting an ox and little mule who help keep him warm. Gifts for the child include a blanket, diaper and poinsettia. Then with words that are oddly exuberant, the lyrics call on visitors to the manger to speak quietly lest they wake *Mi señol Manuele*, "My Lord Emmanuel."

Xichochi, xichochi (Sleep)

This lullaby mixes Nahuatl with Spanish as Mary urges her newborn son to sleep: *Xichochi conetzintle. Caomiz huihui joco in angelos me. Aleloya.* "Gently sleep, little Child. Cry no more, for the angels are here. Alleluia."

Galegos bailarines (Dancing Galicians)

The phrase *Galegos bailarines, folijai, cantando* — "Dancing Galicians singing falala" — will be heard repeatedly throughout the work, describing Galicians singing and dancing to bagpipes. The trek to visit the Christ Child is likened to a pilgrimage to famed Santiago de Compostela in Spain, because the singer, like the pilgrims, has come from his country barefoot — *vene de sua terra sin zapatos*. The lyrics then employ various agricultural metaphors, with references to "holy wheat" and a "sacred bread" made possible by the child's birth in the manger.

Intermission

Vamos al portal (Let's go to the manger)

A shepherd describes arriving at the manger in Bethlehem and being astonished by the Christ Child, whose bright countenance gives light to the *soto y al valle y al prado*, "the grove, the valley and the meadow." The narrator climbs a hill to find the source of the divine light and then decides it does indeed come from the manger, where he sees the child at his mother's side. Again, the brilliant *luz* falls on the *soto, valle and prado*.

Sa qui turo zenta pleta (All the Black folk are here)

With words in Afro-Portuguese and directed at enslaved people in the Americas, it begins with a call to gather and give praise: "All the Black folk are here, all the Guinea folk. With drum, flute and leg rattles. Let's make feast to praise Emmanuel!" The names of various people are called out — Thomas, Catherine, and Fernando among them — and they are urged to sing praise to the one who "born of a maiden is the King who is my God." The song's origins and role in the lives of enslaved peoples are inescapable and reflected in some lyrics which refer to Christ's eventual crucifixion, "And for the Black folk that are captive and for all His friends, He will give His life."

Tambalagumbá

"In a procession, let us go to Bethlehem," begins this piece, which then describes a baby, once shivering, but now being warmed by his mother in the manger. At the gate of Bethlehem, the narrators sing, "we come, the contented people." The narrators also make references to a Brother Vicario and Brother Pelico and what they carry with them, but the emphasis is on the journey to Bethlehem.

Magos a palacio mais (Magi, who are going to the palace)

The lyrics urge the Magi to follow a wise guide, referred to as a page boy, or *paje*, so that they do not stumble on their way to Bethlehem. The boy, we are told, "knows well to find and skillfully illuminate the road that goes to where the kings are going."

Hombres, victoria, victoria! (Men, victory!)

This is a celebration of victory, noting that despite "all hell" — *contra todo'l infierno* — "a tender babe's cry assures our glory." The words go on to say that "Fight and war were born from our Fall, and now God invites us with glory and peace on earth." The lyrics go on to celebrate life and joyful victory, again thanks to a tender babe's cry.

Jesos de mi goracon (Jesus of my heart)

The lyrics are a blend of Spanish and Nahuatl (and Hebrew if we include the alleluia). "Jesus of my heart, do not cry," the song begins. The repeated phrase beginning with *Tleican timochoquilia* gently urges the Christ Child to stop crying, and to look to the peaceful mule and ox in the stable. The words refer to the baby as "my king" and a "lovely, rosy-cheeked one." The two languages are blended throughout, but the last two lines exemplify the mixing of Catholicism with Indigenous imagery as well as the Spanish and Nahuatl: *Noepilhochtzin nino hermosa, nochalchihuj noasojena*. "Noble lord, beautiful boy, my pearl, my white-feathered bird."

Los que fueren de buen gusto (All those who listen with good taste)

The piece opens with a single voice inviting all those "who listen with good taste" to hear a new song from Bethlehem. Other voices quickly join in, all saying *oygamne*, or "listen to me." The lyrics get rather busy, with the various voices either asking what all the singing is about, or each one insisting that they should be the one telling the story. Finally, order is restored when all agree to stop shouting — *quitémonos de ruidos* — and to sing together. The song then praises Mary as the "young girl who brought down from heaven a star to us on earth." Then, through extended lyrics, the song describes Jesus' birth, his mission to save humankind, his great strength and his compassion for sinners: "He goes about forgiving our lives, prized greatly as a lion, yet tears are brought to his eyes by the poorest sinner." The song ends asking that God grant all a happy Christmas.

Convidando esta la noche (Nighttime was an invitation)

The song begins slowly with an invitation for musicians to gather to sing hymns to the newborn babe. Then the music speeds up and what follows are a series of exclamations — each punctuated with a joyful "ay!" — that describe the Christ Child or the feelings of the narrator, some of which border on religious ecstasy. "How I burn, divine master, in the beauty of your eyes!" Another example: "How a hundred stars pour down. Rays of glory, rays of fire!" The music slows once more to note that gifts were brought to the Christ Child, and that people began a lively dance known as a *guaracha*. Another series of exclamations begins. Among them: "How his mother, as if in hope, watches him grow in the light he creates" and "With our *guaracha* let us toast Him while the child goes to sleep." The piece ends with the singers giving thanks and saying they have finished their song: "Peace to all people is given from heaven, thanks be to God. Now we will be silent!"

Regarding the texts: A note from the Artistic Director

Scholars and performers working with the music of the New World are well aware that many of the texts are, by today's standards, politically very incorrect. Latin America in Colonial times included not only Spaniards and a wide variety of Indigenous people, but also enslaved people brought primarily from Angola. While the rhythms and melodies of such a mixture of peoples contribute to the appeal and artistry of this music, the texts have led to many conductors to stop performing much of this repertoire. Indeed, in crafting tonight's program, we realized several Jouyssance favorites from past *Spirit Child* performances would be inappropriate to include.

However, by eliminating this music entirely, we would be erasing an important — if disturbing — part of our history that we need to preserve in order to prevent repeating it. And besides, it's terrific music, and includes some of the earliest efforts by Mexican-born composers. One can't wipe out the atrocities and injustice committed at the time, but one must not erase the art that survives. We hope you can look beyond the politics and enjoy the show!

About the Performers

Gustavo Arellano is a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, writing about California, the West and sometimes points beyond. At OC Weekly, he was editor and an investigative reporter and is the author of *Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America*.

Artistic Director **Nicole Baker's** passion, humor and vision have helped further the mission of Jouyissance since 1999. Dr. Baker earned her MFA in vocal performance and her Ph.D. in musicology from UCLA, and served on the music history and voice faculties of California State University, Fullerton for 25 years. She has conducted choirs throughout Southern California, and currently works as the Traditional Choir Director at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Pasadena.

Jouyissance Early Music Ensemble is Southern California's only vocal ensemble dedicated exclusively to early music. With predecessor ensembles dating back to 1961, Jouyissance is dedicated to presenting historically informed performances that inspire, entertain and educate.

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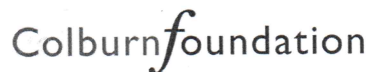
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Jouyissance would like to thank...

Gustavo Arellano, our guest narrator; Anthony Alcain, our Administrative Director; Father Robert Gaestel and Alice Kirwan Murray at Church of the Angels; Rev. Neil Tadken, Kent Jones, and Danielle Strong at St. Luke's Episcopal Church; Rev. Greg Brown and Michael Robinson at Holy Nativity Episcopal Church; Irene Cowley for music preparation; the UPS Store of San Marino for photocopying; Jennifer Jurick for graphic design; George Sterne for library management; and our concert volunteers.

Jouyissance Early Music Ensemble is a program of the Foundation of the Neo-Renaissance, and receives support from the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the Colburn Foundation, and our generous patrons like you!



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